

Message Text

SECRET

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15

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 PM-09 NSC-10 SS-14 RSC-01 CIAE-00

INR-09 NSAE-00 T-03 EB-11 L-03 AID-20 RSR-01 /096 W

----- 106190

R 210134 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8520

INFO CINCPAC

CNO

S E C R E T SINGAPORE 1155

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, SN

SUBJECT: A-4 B PROGRAM

REFERENCE: STATE 37367

1. I CONVEYED SUBSTANCE REFTEL PERSONALLY TO PANG TEE POW, PERMSEC MINDEF, IN EFFORT TO CONVINCE HIM THAT IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR USN TO PROVIDE ACTIVE DUTY PERSONNEL FOR A-4 B PROGRAM FOR PURPOSES THEY HAD IN MIND. I ARGUED THAT QUALIFIED RETIRED PERSONNEL COULD CARRY OUT FUNCTIONS SATISFACTORILY AND URGED PANG TO RECONSIDER LIST OF RETIREES PREVIOUSLY PROVIDED.

2. PANG AND HIS SENIOR STAFF WERE ADAMANTLY OPPOSED TO HIRING RETIRED OFFICERS. THEY HAVE HAD SOME LESS THAN SATISFACTORY EXPERIENCES WITH RETIRED MILITARY ADVISORS AND CONSIDER IT ESSENTIAL ADVISORS ON THIS PROJECT BE EXTREMELY FAMILIAR WITH USN LOGISTICS AND OPERATIONAL SUPPORT OF A-4 IN ORDER TO EFFECTIVELY COORDINATE AND IDENTIFY REQUIREMENTS AND PROVIDE GOS WITH REALISTIC EXPERTISE. PANG STRESSED THAT LOCKHEED HAS ONLY ONE PART OF A-4 PROJECT, REFURBISHMENT OF AIRCRAFT, BUT SPARE PARTS PROVISIONING AND CERTAIN ASPECTS OF TRAINING ARE NOT RESPONSIBILITY OF LOCKHEED AND LOCKHEED NOT IN POSITION PROVIDE UNBIASED ADVICE ON THESE ASPECTS OF PROGRAM. AS THINGS STAND NOW, THEY FEEL TOTALLY AT
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MERCY OF LOCKHEED AND WANT SOME OTHER AVENUE OF COMMUNICATIONS WITH USN, EITHER DIRECTLY OR VIA THIS MISSION, ON VALID, IDENTIFIED ELEMENTS OF PROGRAM. PANG SAYS THAT THEY HAVE NO INTENTION OF PUTTING OUR OFFICERS IN BETWEEN GOS AND LOCKHEED AND THAT GOS WILL DEAL DIRECTLY WITH LOCKHEED ON ALL MATTERS FOR WHICH LOCKHEED RESPONSIBLE. FURTHER, PANG SAYS THEY HAVE ABSOLUTELY NO INTENTION OF HOLDING USN RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY ASPECTS OF PROGRAM BEYOND ITS CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATIONS. THEY WOULD BE PREPARED TO STATE THIS UNEQUIVOCALLY IN ANY FORM WE LIKE.

3. PANG HAS SENT ME FOLLOWING LETTER SETTING FORTH THESE VIEWS:

QUOTE (1.) PLEASE REFER TO OUR DISCUSSION IN MY OFFICE ON 5 TH MARCH, 1973, AT WHICH LTC PETER O' CONNOR, MR. ONG KAH KOK AND MAJOR HENRY CHEONG WERE PRESENT.

(2.) I WISH TO CONFIRM THAT IT IS NOT THE INTENTION TO HOLD ANY PROJECT PERSONNEL MADE AVAILABLE BY THE US GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE FAILURE OF CONTRACTOR TO PERFORM OR THE SUCCESS OF THE PROJECT AS A WHOLE. COMMUNICATION FROM SINGAPORE WITH THE CONTRACTOR WILL BE DONE ONLY BY OURSELVES.

(3.) IT IS SUGGESTED THAT THE TWO OFFICERS BE MADE AVAILABLE TO YOUR EMBASSY, BUT FUNDED BY US TO WORK SPECIFICALLY ON THIS PROJECT.

(4.) YOU WOULD APPRECIATE THAT OUR MAIN CONCERN IS TO UTILIZE MANAGEMENT AND LOGISTICS EXPERTISE FOR THE PROJECT AS A WHOLE (OF WHICH THE DEALINGS WITH THE CONTRACTOR ARE ONLY A PART), AND TO HAVE AN EFFECTIVE MEANS OF COMMUNICATION TO THE USN TO REALIZE THOSE PARTS OF THE PROGRAMME WHICH CONCERN IT. WE FEEL THAT RETIRED PERSONNEL COULD NOT SERVE THIS PURPOSE EFFICIENTLY.

(5.) MAY I THEREFORE REQUEST YOU USE YOUR GOOD OFFICES TO ASK THE AUTHORITIES IN WASHINGTON TO RECONSIDER THEIR DECISIONS SO FAR ON THIS MATTER. UNQUOTE

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4. WHILE I APPRECIATE STRENGTH OF ARGUMENTS SET FORTH

REFTEL AND HAVE HESITATED RAISING THIS ISSUE ONCE AGAIN,
I FEEL WE SHOULD GIVE IT FURTHER CONSIDERATION SINCE
USG HAS RATHER BROAD AND LONG TERM INTERESTS HERE WHICH
COULD BE AFFECTED IF A-4 B PROGRAM FALTERS. IT SEEMS TO
ME TO BE CLEARLY IN OUR INTEREST TO TRY TO ACCOMMODATE
THEM ON THIS MATTER INSOFAR AS POSSIBLE.

5. I WILL COVER THIS SUBJECT IN MY MEETING WITH ADMIRAL
GAYLER DURING HIS VISIT APRIL 7-10 SINCE IT MAY WELL ARISE
DURING HIS OFFICIAL CALLS ON DR. GOH AND OTHERS. WITH
THIS IN MIND, I AM INCLUDING CINCPAC AS AN INFO ADDRESSEE.
CRONK

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** SECRET

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 MAR 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973SINGAP01155
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: SINGAPORE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730335/aaaaidzc.tel
Line Count: 131
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 73 STATE 37367
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 04 DEC 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <04-Dec-2001 by kelleyw0>; APPROVED <21-Dec-2001 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> srp 971219
Subject: A-4 B PROGRAM
TAGS: MASS, SN
To: EA
SECSTATE WASHDC INFO CINCPAC
CNO
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005